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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER	
BEKKER, KELLY JO	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1781	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/697,800	BERNARD ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	KELLY BEKKER	1781	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *12 April 2010*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *30-33,35-50 and 61-71* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *30-33,35-50 and 61-71* is/are rejected.

7)☒ Claim(s) *33* is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Applicant's amendments made April 12, 2010 have been entered.
Claims 30-33, 35-50, and 61-71 are remain pending.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 12, 2010 has been entered.

Claim Objections

Claim 33 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Claim 33 recites, "Gelatin-free soft caramel as in Claim 32, where gum arabic and gellan gum are present in a ratio from 5:1 to 15:1." Claim 32 also recites "a mixture of gum arabic and gellan gum in a ratio from 5:1 to 15:1". Thus, the limitation of claim 33 does not further limit claim 32, the claim from which it depends on.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 41 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 41 recites the limitation "protein component" in claim 38. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 38 and the claims from which claim 38 depends do not recite a "protein component".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 30, 32, 33, 35, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44-47, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barrett et al. (US 6531174 B2) in view of Koji et al. (JP 40119164A as translated by the USPTO May 2008).

Barrett et al (Barrett) teaches of a composition that is a sweet composition made from syrup, fat, and a sweetener solution by boiling (Abstract and Example 2) and as Applicant defines "soft caramel" as "a sweet that is made from syrup, fat, and a sweetener solution by boiling" (See specification, page 3 paragraph 4), Barrett teaches of a soft caramel as instantly claimed. Barrett teaches that preferably all of the gelatin in the product is replaced, and thus the product is gelatin free (abstract). Barrett teaches that the caramel contains polysaccharide hydrocolloid is selected from the group including gum arabic, gellan gum, and combinations thereof (Column 2 lines 23-29). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains about 0-10% gum arabic (Column 4 lines 33-35). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains 0.5-5% additional ingredients and teaches gellan gum as an additional ingredient, thus teaching the composition comprises about 0.5-5% gellan gum (Column 2 lines 19-27). Thus, Barrett teaches that the ratio of gum arabic to gellan gum encompasses a ratio of 5-15:1 as recited in claim 33. Barrett teaches that the caramel contains a crystalline sweetener phase in combination with a non crystalline sweetener phase (Examples 1-3). Barrett teaches that the non-crystalline sweetener phase is formed of maltitol syrup and/or glucose syrup (Column 4 lines 39-54 and Column 5 lines 30-35). Barrett teaches that the caramel can include crystalline sucrose which can be replaced entirely with sugar substitutes, thus teaching that the caramel can be sucrose free (Column 4 lines 39-54).

Barrett teaches that different types of sugar systems are used to manipulate the final texture properties of the final product, for example a chewing product will include a crystalline sugar (Column 4 lines 50-53). Barrett teaches that the composition contains about 0.5-20%, preferably about 2-12% fat (Column 5 lines 12-15). Barrett teaches that the caramel contains emulsifiers, artificial sweeteners, flavor enhancers, and coloring agents, such as natural and synthetic food dyes (Column 5 lines 16-24 and 34-39). Barrett teaches that the caramel contains about 0.1-5% milk proteins (Column 5 lines 16-24). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains essential oils (Column 2 lines 58-68). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains about 2-10% water (Column 2 lines 10-12). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains medicinal active agents, such as vitamins, minerals, and herbal extracts (Column 3 lines 60-67).

Barrett is silent to the crystalline sweetener phase as isomaltulose as recited in claim 30.

Koji et al. (Koji) teaches of a caramel composition which has improved taste, with little induction of dental caries, outstanding shapability and shape retentivity without the need for addition of sucrose, formed by incorporating palatinose, i.e. isomaltulose (Abstract).

Regarding the crystalline sweetener phase as isomaltulose, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to substitute palatinose or a combination of palatinose and sucrose for a portion of the sugar in the caramel composition as taught by Barrett in view of Koji. One would have been motivated to do so for the benefits of palatinose or isomaltulose, such an improved dental candy as taught by Koji, and to obtain improved taste and shape of the caramel composition as taught by Koji.

Regarding the limitation wherein the isomaltulose is the only crystalline sweetener present in the caramel, Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar replacer (Column 4 lines 45-48) and Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably be the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup (page 6 lines 4-14). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made for the only crystalline sugar to be isomaltulose since Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar replacer; Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably be the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup (page 6 lines 4-14); and to do so would remove all of the sucrose in the caramel and maximize the benefit of the isomaltulose.

Claims 36, 37, 43, 48, and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barrett et al. (US 6531174 B2) in view of Koji et al. (JP 40119164A as translated by the USPTO May 2008), further in view of Willibald-Ettle et al. (US 6458400 B1).

Barrett teach of a caramel composition as discussed above. Barrett is silent to the caramel as containing a high intensity sweetener as recited in claim 36, selected from a specific group including saccharin as recited in claims 37 and 48, a specific food dye, such as riboflavin, as recited in claim 43, and an active substance, such as mentholeucalyptus as recited in claim 50.

Willibald-Ettle (Willibald) teach of soft confections and the use of sweeteners in those confections (abstract). Willibald teaches that intensive sweeteners, including saccharin are add to confections to increase the sweetening power (Column 3 lines 25-34). Willibald teaches a suitable colorant for confectionary materials is riboflavin (Column 3 lines 34-44). Willibald teaches that suitable additives for confections include clinically active substances, such as mentholeucalyptus (Column 3 lines 5-17).

Regarding the caramel as containing a high intensity sweetener, such as saccharin, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a combination of sweeteners depending on the desired sweetness of the final product. One would have been motivated to add saccharin, i.e. a high intensity sweetener, in order to increase the sweetness of the final product with minimal amounts of the ingredient. Such was commonly done as shown by Willibald and would have been within the ordinary skill and ingenuity of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Regarding the caramel as containing a specific food dye, such as riboflavin, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a colorant, such as riboflavin, in the confectionary product depending on the desired color of the final confectionary product. Such was commonly done as shown by Willibald and would have been within the ordinary skill and ingenuity of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Regarding the caramel as containing an active substance, such as mentholeucalyptus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a known medicament for confectionary materials depending on the desired effect of the confection during consumption, i.e. one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to include mentholeucalyptus in the caramel confection in order to obtain a final product that had a soothing throat effect when consumed. Such was commonly done as shown by Willibald and would have been within the ordinary skill and ingenuity of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claims 31, 40, 62-64, and 67-70 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barrett et al. (US 6531174 B2) in view of the combination of Koji et al. (JP 40119164A as translated by the USPTO May 2008) and Igoe et al (Dictionary of Food Ingredients 3rd Edition, page 107).

Barrett et al (Barrett) teaches of a composition that is a sweet composition made from syrup, fat, and a sweetener solution by boiling (Abstract and Example 2) and as Applicant defines "soft caramel" as "a sweet that is made from syrup, fat, and a sweetener solution by boiling" (See specification, page 3 paragraph 4), Barrett teaches of a soft caramel as instantly claimed. Barrett teaches that preferably all of the gelatin in the product is replaced, and thus the product is gelatin free (abstract). Barrett teaches that the caramel contains polysaccharide hydrocolloid is selected from the group including gum arabic, gellan gum, and combinations thereof (Column 2 lines 23-29). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains about 0-10% gum arabic (Column 4 lines 33-35). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains 0.5-5%

additional ingredients and teaches gellan gum as an additional ingredient, thus teaching the composition comprises about 0.5-5% gellan gum (Column 2 lines 19-27). Thus, Barrett teaches that the ratio of gum arabic to gellan gum encompasses a ratio of 5-15:1 as recited in claim 33. Barrett teaches that the caramel contains a crystalline sweetener phase in combination with a non crystalline sweetener phase (Examples 1-3). Barrett teaches that the non-crystalline sweetener phase is formed of maltitol syrup and/or glucose syrup (Column 4 lines 39-54 and Column 5 lines 30-35). Barrett teaches that the caramel can include crystalline sucrose which can be replaced entirely with sugar substitutes, thus teaching that the caramel can be sucrose free (Column 4 lines 39-54). Barrett teaches that different types of sugar systems are used to manipulate the final texture properties of the final product, for example a chewing product will include a crystalline sugar (Column 4 lines 50-53). Barrett teaches that the composition contains about 0.5-20%, preferably about 2-12% fat (Column 5 lines 12-15). Barrett teaches that the caramel contains emulsifiers, artificial sweeteners, flavor enhancers, and coloring agents, such as natural and synthetic food dyes (Column 5 lines 16-24 and 34-39). Barrett teaches that the caramel contains about 0.1-5% milk proteins (Column 5 lines 16-24). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains essential oils (Column 2 lines 58-68). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains about 2-10% water (Column 2 lines 10-12). Barrett teaches that the caramel composition contains medicinal active agents, such as vitamins, minerals, and herbal extracts (Column 3 lines 60-67).

Barrett is silent to the crystalline sweetener phase as isomaltulose and to the caramel as comprising polydextrose as recited in claim 62.

Koji et al. (Koji) teaches of a caramel composition which has improved taste, with little induction of dental caries, outstanding shapability and shape retentivity without the need for addition of sucrose, formed by incorporating palatinose, i.e. isomaltulose (Abstract).

Igoe et al (Igoe) teaches that polydextrose is a bulking agent that contains small amounts of bound sorbitol and citric acid. Igoe teaches that polydextrose is a water soluble powder which is a reduced calorie bulking agent that can be used to partially

replace sugars. Igoe teaches that polydextrose also functions as a bodying agent and humectant. Igoe teaches that polydextrose is applied in foods and candy compositions. Refer to page 107.

Regarding the crystalline sweetener phase as isomaltulose, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to substitute palatinose or a combination of palatinose and sucrose for a portion of the sugar in the caramel composition as taught by Barrett in view of Koji. One would have been motivated to do so for the benefits of palatinose or isomaltulose, such an improved dental candy as taught by Koji, and to obtain improved taste and shape of the caramel composition as taught by Koji.

Regarding the limitation wherein the isomaltulose is the only crystalline sweetener present in the caramel, Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar replacer (Column 4 lines 45-48) and Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably be the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup (page 6 lines 4-14). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for the only crystalline sugar to be isomaltulose since Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar replacer; Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably be the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup (page 6 lines 4-14); and to do so would remove all of the sucrose in the caramel and maximize the benefit of the isomaltulose.

Regarding the caramel as comprising polydextrose, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for the caramel composition as taught by Barrett to include polydextrose in view of Igoe as Barrett teaches of a caramel composition which optionally comprises humectants (Column 2 lines 13-16), in which sugar can be replaced (Column 4 lines 45-48), and which includes citric acids (Column 5 lines 3-8) and Igoe teaches that polydextrose is a humectant and sugar replacer that contains citric acid. To use a conventionally known ingredient for its known and intended function would have been obvious and routine determination to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claims 61, 65, 66, and 71 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barrett et al. (US 6531174 B2) in view of the combination of Koji et al. (JP 40119164A as translated by the USPTO May 2008) and Igoe (Dictionary of Food Ingredients 3rd Edition page 107), further in view of Willibald-Ettle et al. (US 6458400 B1).

Barrett teach of a caramel composition as discussed above. Barrett is silent to the caramel as containing a high intensity sweetener as recited in claim 65, selected from a specific group including saccharin as recited in claims 66 and 71, and an active substance, such as mentholeucalyptus as recited in claim 61.

Willibald-Ettle (Willibald) teach of soft confections and the use of sweeteners in those confections (abstract). Willibald teaches that intensive sweeteners, including saccharin are add to confections to increase the sweetening power (Column 3 lines 25-34). Willibald teaches a suitable colorant for confectionary materials is riboflavin (Column 3 lines 34-44). Willibald teaches that suitable additives for confections include clinically active substances, such as mentholeucalyptus (Column 3 lines 5-17).

Regarding the caramel as containing a high intensity sweetener, such as saccharin, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select a combination of sweeteners depending on the desired sweetness of the final product. One would have been motivated to add saccharin, i.e. a high intensity sweetener, in order to increase the sweetness of the final product with minimal amounts of the ingredient. Such was commonly done as shown by Willibald and would have been within the ordinary skill and ingenuity of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Regarding the caramel as containing a specific food dye, such as riboflavin, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a colorant, such as riboflavin, in the confectionary product depending on the desired color of the final confectionary product. Such was commonly done as shown by Willibald and would have been within the ordinary skill and ingenuity of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Regarding the caramel as containing an active substance, such as mentholeucalyptus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a known medicament for confectionary materials depending on the desired effect of the confection during consumption, i.e. one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have been motivated to include mentholeucalyptus in the caramel confection in order to obtain a final product that had a soothing throat effect when consumed. Such was commonly done as shown by Willibald and would have been within the ordinary skill and ingenuity of one of ordinary skill in the art.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed April 12, 2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that there are surprising and unexpected results because isomaltulose is not temperature stable. Applicant's argument is not convincing as the references of record teach of substantially the same product as instantly claimed and as the references of record teach of a product with isomaltulose at high temperatures and it would be expected that the products of the references would inherently be stable. Therefore, it is unclear as to what is unexpected about the temperature stability of the final product.

Applicant argues that it has been surprisingly established the these combinations of polysaccharide hydrocolloids has properties to enable the complete replacement of gelatin as texturizing agent in soft caramel while retaining special texture and consistency. Applicant's argument is not convincing as the references of record teach of substantially the same product as instantly claimed and as applcaint has provided no evidence of said surprising and unexpected results from the claimed composition.

Applicant argues that the claims exclude the presence of sucrose. First it is noted that independent claim 62 recites the limitation applicant is referring to, however, independent claim 30 does not recite said limitation. Additionally applicant's argument is not convincing as Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar

replacer (Column 4 lines 45-48) and Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably be the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup (page 6 lines 4-14). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for caramel to be sucrose free and the only crystalline sugar to be isomaltulose since Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar replacer; Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably be the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup; and to do so would remove all of the sucrose in the caramel and maximize the benefit of the isomaltulose.

Applicant argues that there is no teaching or suggestion by Barrett of the use of isomaltulose, that all of the examples in Barrett employ a single sweetener which is either sucrose or crystalline sucrose, that Barrett does not recognize a need for a crystalline and non-crystalline sweetener phase free of gelatin, and that Koji does not teach or suggest using a non-crystalline sweetener phase which is maltitol syrup or polydextrose or hydrogenated starch hydrolysate or a combination thereof in combination with a crystalline phase which is isomaltulose together with a polysaccharide hydrocolloid to produce a gelatin free soft caramel.

Applicant's argument is not convincing as:

> One cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986);
>
> The examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, applicant's argument is not convincing; and
>
> As stated in the previous office action, Barrett teaches of forming a gelatin free soft caramel (abstract) comprising polysaccharide hydrocolloids, including

gum arabic and gellan gum (Column 2 lines 16-28), and preferably a crystalline sweetener phase including crystalline sucrose in combination with sugar replacement which is selected from the group including non-crystalline sweetener phases of maltitol and/or glucose syrup which is a starch hydrolysate (Column 4 lines 39-54, Column 5 lines 30-33, and Examples 1-3); Barrett is silent to the crystalline sweetener phase as isomaltulose, wherein isomaltulose is the only crystalline sugar in the composition; Koji teaches of a caramel composition which has improved taste, with little induction of dental caries, outstanding shapability and shape retentivity without the need for addition of sucrose, formed by incorporating palatinose, which is another name for isomaltulose (Abstract); thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to substitute isomaltulsoe for all of the sucrose, i.e. the crystalline sweetener phase, in the caramel composition as taught by Barrett in view of Koji; As Barrett teaches that all the sugar can be replaced with a sugar replacers (Column 4 lines 45-48) and Koji teaches that isomaltulose is preferably the only crystalline sweetener in combination with a sugar syrup (page 6 lines 4-14), one would have been motivated to substitute isomaltulsoe for all of the sucrose, i.e. the non-crystalline sweetener phase, in the caramel composition in order to remove sucrose which is harmful to the dental needs of the consumer and to maximize the benefits of the isomaltulose, including the formation of an improved dental candy with improved taste and shape as taught by Koji.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., the exclusion of modified starch) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Applicant argues that the hydrocolloids of claim 30 do not include a modified starch. Applicant's argument is not convincing as the clams do not exclude a modified starch and as the references of record, specifically Barrett teaches of the hydrocolloids instantly claimed, including gum arabic and gellan gum.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to KELLY BEKKER whose telephone number is (571)272-2739. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Keith Hendricks can be reached on (571) 272-1401. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kelly Bekker/
Examiner
Art Unit 1781